

Volume LXXXV No. 4 October 28, 1966 30 cents

COMMONWEAL



Fall Book Issue

MALAMUD'S HEROES

The fate of fixers

Jonathan Baumbach

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We believe that responsible democracy could suffer a crippling defeat in 1966—unless prompt action is taken.

We seek support for Senate and House candidates whose election will prevent a major retreat in American political life.

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1966 will be one of the most fateful mid-term elections of this century.

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Two issues burn like a prairie fire across the country: civil rights and Vietnam. In civil rights, angry extremists are rapidly driving the moderates from the field. The Center is silent. The violent Right grows ominously stronger. Vietnam pressures to "go all out" or to "get out" have obscured our purpose—to the point where we have lost our sense of direction, not just in Vietnam,

but everywhere on the globe.

What the Right failed to achieve by frontal attack in '64, they may achieve piecemeal this fall. They hope to defeat liberal congressmen who won by narrow margins in '64. If they do, control of the Congress will revert to the destructive coalition of Old Guard Republicans and Old Guard Southerners.

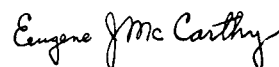
It is to avoid this catastrophe that we seek your support for men whose quality and courage will preserve the vital Center: Senate candidates like Lee Metcalf in Montana, Ralph Harding in Idaho, Frank Morrison in Nebraska.

House candidates like George Senner in Arizona, James Corman and John Tunney in California, Roy McVicker in Colorado, John Culver in Iowa, Gale Schisler in Illinois, Weston Vivian in Michigan, James Howard in New Jersey, Lester Wolff in New York, John Gilligan in Ohio, Neiman Craley in Pennsylvania and Lynn Stalbaum in Wisconsin.

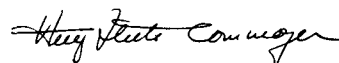
These are some of the men we support: invaluable Senate candidates and some 50 men in the House who represent clear-cut choices against right wing opponents. They are the men we cannot afford to lose. Their continued effectiveness depends on you.

Danger signals are already fluttering in the winds of fear and of hate. With

your help we can offer the country an alternative to reaction, resentment, and retreat. Vigilance is the price of freedom, but vigilance alone is not enough. We need your support, \$100, \$50, \$10. Every dollar, like every vote, makes an important difference. *The important difference.*



EUGENE J. MCCARTHY
United States Senator



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NEWS AND VIEWS

From the *Newsletter of the Military Ordinariate*, printed in New York for American Catholic chaplains:

"*Innovations*. A senior chaplain writes us as follows (and we think his point is excellent): 'I hope you will include an item in your next *Newsletter* offering guidance to Catholic chaplains to place only positive and spiritual literature in their chapel or office racks—avoiding newspapers, magazines or pamphlets which are controversial or polemic, against other faiths or even questioning our own practices. (My own dismay at seeing the *National Catholic Review* (sic), *Ave Maria*, *Commonweal*, *Ramparts*, etc., on the stands, makes me feel there is an absence of thoughtful discussion led by a Catholic chaplain at that post.) The more our chaplains teach Christ the better. I know that literature is a ticklish problem, but somehow a policy of the Military Ordinariate should be observed by the Catholic Padres all over the world. I know you are aware as I am of the confusion existing in the minds of Catholics regarding interpretations of the Conciliar statements. Setting out literature that attacks bishops, priests, nuns and traditional Catholic beliefs and morality just adds to the confusion of Catholic soldiers who have a simple faith, not disturbed by theological arguments.'"

The Catholic Association for International Peace will hold its annual conference October 27-28 at the Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C. Speakers will include Emmett Hughes of *Newsweek*; Bishop John J. Wright; William Pfaff of the Hudson Institute; Father Daniel Berigan, S.J.; Curt Naylor of the National Council of Churches; Msgr. George Higgins of NCWC; and Victor Ferkiss of Georgetown University.

Bishop Sheen, in the introduction to a new booklet on American Catholic missionary work, offers some comparisons of mission activities by various countries.

The United States, for instance, has 9,303 priests serving in missions abroad. Germany has 17,000. The U.S. has 3,707 sisters and 549 laymen in the field, while Germany has 11,600 sisters and 1,400 lay missionaries. Holland, with one-tenth the Catholic population of America, has 6,000 priests overseas.

The new look in the Curia:

Quite a number of the Catholic clergy are using the Vatican Council as the excuse for spreading an 'anything goes' mentality in the Church," a Vatican spokesman said. "But it is this mentality, damaging to both Catholics and separated brethren, which Cardinal Ottaviani, on behalf of Pope Paul, aims to correct."

The Catholic Herald

John Dalrymple in the September issue of *Clergy Review*:

"It is no longer controversial to say that in the past much of the authority in the Church has been exercised wrongly. Many avoidable situations have been allowed to develop because subjects who could have protested to their superiors kept quiet in the name of holy abandon. One thinks of the sort of convent where an autocratic lady has misruled a community for years with real abuses, with every sister knowing about those abuses and no one doing anything about them until perhaps a bishop has got to know about it and had to close the place. A stitch in time ten years earlier might have avoided anything so drastic, but a stitch in time and holy abandon do not seem to go together.

"One feels instinctively when this happens that there has been a misunderstanding of abandonment to the will of God, but where exactly it lies is not obvious, and in practice where do you draw the line between a just appeal against the foolish decisions of a superior and a holy submission to the wisdom of the cross as evidenced in the same foolish decisions of the superior? . . .

"The solution to the dilemma outlined above lies surely in realizing that what we have to submit our wills to all the time is the will of God, and that this does not entail submitting necessarily to inaction or necessarily to action. . . . There is in us all a native quietism which tends to make us equate submission to God's will with inactivity and silence, as if following Christ always meant being a doormat and allowing others to ride roughshod over us. Occasionally it may mean that. As frequently, it will mean activity, as it did for Christ himself when he cleansed the Temple in order to carry out his Father's will. Christ's own life, as always, is our model here. It has occasions both of extreme patience and extreme impatience. Each time it was not the means of action that concerned him, but the end—doing the Father's will, his 'meat.' The operative word is the word 'extreme.' We have to be extreme in our response to the call of God's word, but each time we have also to make certain which kind of extremity is being asked of us before we act."

The golf prayer, printed here recently, spurred one reader to send in the following hotel prayer, recently addressed by a New Orleans priest to the Divine Hotelman in the sky:

"Almighty and Everlasting God, Supreme Innkeeper of the Eternal Mansions, we invoke Thy blessing upon this assembly of the American Hotel and Motel Association. Teach us, O Divine Hotelman, never to be skippers in our duties to God and country. . . . May our front desks ever conduct themselves with honor. . . . We pray Thee, O Eternal Host, that in matters of spiritual strength, the house of our innermost conscience may always be running to capacity. May honesty be *maître d'* of our conduct, and respect for our fellow man the housekeeper of our souls. For all these things, we pray, that when the check-out time comes, the bottom line will show the record of lives lived in accord with Thy law: that when the Heavenly Greeter meets us in death, he may welcome us at the Celestial Front Desk with these consoling words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

JOHN LEO

CORRESPONDENCE



From Archbishop Alter

Cincinnati, Ohio

To the Editors: Will you kindly permit me to set the record straight with regard to your editorial of October 7 entitled "Shackling the Sisters." The directives to which the article makes reference were issued a full year ago and were acknowledged immediately, in the following, exact words, by the Mother Superior. "I write to thank you for your letter of September 18, and for the directives to the community which are included in it. I am aware that much thought and prayer has preceded the issuing of these directives, and in the name of all the Sisters I wish to express sincere appreciation for Your Grace's concern and for your guidance."

Judging from all available evidence, no serious impediment has been created for the Sisters in the fulfillment of their apostolate. The Glenmary Sisters were established in this Archdiocese of Cincinnati on my own responsibility and under my jurisdiction in things spiritual and temporal as provided in Church Law. They were encouraged, guided, and financially assisted since their establishment in 1952 largely through the efforts of the present archbishop. The directive which states that no new houses are to be established and no new members temporarily accepted was arrived at by mutual agreement, in order that in this new religious community the specific apostolate of the Sisters, with the necessary preparation of candidates, might be more carefully studied, and that more time might be allowed to enlarge physical facilities and to provide adequate finances for increased growth.

Certain inaccuracies, furthermore, appear in the article, which in justice should be corrected. The directives do not state that the Sisters must be in bed by 10 p.m. This normal retirement hour was for the purpose of adequate rest; exceptions were to be made by the superior or her vicar as needed. Personal safety as well as religious decorum seem to make it reasonable that the Sisters be off the streets by

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Something startling is overtaking our national politics. It has not much to do—directly—with Vietnam, the pendulum of off-year elections or the growing disenchantment with President Johnson. Tentatively, it can be described as the breakdown of consensus politics: a growing separation and polarization, much publicized on the right, not so well publicized on the left. There is, in the words of I. F. Stone, "a new kind of secession in the air."

In Georgia, a succession of political accidents and miscalculations have propelled the racist Lester Maddox to the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, jolting the fragile moderate movement in the state. A similar development has occurred in the Arkansas Democratic Party: a minor political figure, without any help from the party machinery, has emerged as a Yahoo segregationist candidate who manages to make Orval Faubus look like a shining progressive. Much of the rhetoric of both nominees is based on a promise to cut the state free of allegedly smothering federal control. If, for some Negroes, the cry of "black power" awakens the emotional urge to separate, or opt out of the promised consensus, the same impulse can be discerned in the newly rejuvenated cracker politics of the deep South.

On the left, the decision of California radicals to repudiate Governor Brown takes its urgency only from the fact that the opposition is Ronald Reagan. In the past, the factions on the left have customarily rallied round to combat the radicals on the right. In walking out on the election, a group of California radicals are angrily overthrowing the genteel rules of the game: their support cannot be taken for granted merely because of a new fright on the right. What we have here—and there are many confirming signs on the national horizon of the New Left—is a secession from the normal political system.

In the pragmatic American political tradition, such signs are not always taken seriously: the offended generally come back to the fold, and to pursue a policy of "rule-or-ruin" is to banish oneself from the political stage. But the secessionist impulse, with its ideological contempt for compromise, should not be dismissed too easily. The New Left may yet take the traditional path and seek to pull the Democratic Party to the left by traditional means. On the

other hand, the polarization and rigidity of the California group may be ominous omens for 1968.

The immediate beneficiaries of the instinct for polarization is the far right. Ronald Reagan is likely to win in California with the *de facto* blessing bestowed by the desertion of Brown by voters on the left. In Texas, Senator Tower will again receive the votes of the state's liberal Democrats, as a protest against Governor Connally's undistinguished nominee. Elsewhere the erosion of consensus politics is less spectacular but pervasive. In Illinois, for example, Senator Paul Douglas appears to be in trouble, partly, no doubt, because of the widespread sympathy for Charles Percy, whose daughter was murdered during the campaign, but partly also because Douglas, who once looked like a fiercely independent progressive, is now a firm member of the Johnsonian consensus. Many on the left may boycott this election too.

But the most ominous issue is, of course, race. "Black power" may be as much symptom as cause: a realization by Negroes that the standard techniques of non-violent consensus politics will not work much longer, particularly as the focus of the Negro movement moves north. "Black power," understood as political and social power for a Negro-led rights movement, is traditional enough. But the wilder statements of both Negro and white demagogues currently threaten a dangerous polarization here that could parallel and reinforce what is happening on the far left and the far right.

I. F. Stone writes: "There are an increasing number on right and left, among white and black, who would like to opt out—just where they do not know, but *out*. There is not only a readiness to tear down the pillars of society if they cannot obtain satisfaction but even a perverse hope that all will fail." Our politics has always tended toward the middle, toward the muting of apocalyptic voices with compromises. Always, of course, the compromises have given way before new pressures and ideals, which have lead in turn to new compromises and adjustments. Only once in our history was the apocalyptic impulse given its head."

One factor, we believe, in spurring the current polarization is a breakdown in the normal machinery. Consensus has become suspect; issues are not engaged. The idealism that must go hand in hand with the traditional American pragmatism has tended to become cynical of the issue-blurring Johnsonian consensus. The question, "Where are we going?" has to be answered at least implicitly in the consensus. We don't think it has been in this one.

TRANSPORTATION DEPT.

When President Johnson signed into law on October 15th a bill creating a cabinet-level Department of Transportation, no one seemed to notice what an appropriate

month it was. For it is in October, traditionally, that the proudest (and richest) industrial fathers in the land announce the beginning of our annual metallic baby-boom.

Their offspring are of course automobiles and trucks, procreated with at least as much ardor and far more planning than human babies, celebrated with all the beaming joy of well-financed advertising men, and cooed over by economists, oil companies, toll collectors and road-builders. All of which is to say that while there are many important modes of transportation other than cars and trucks, the latter constitute the Nation's Number One transportation problem.

The reasons for this are not far to seek. At their worst, airplanes can cause considerable noise over a few residential areas; they can also crash, taking a few lives. Trains make noise as well, but railroad right-of-ways have been a long-established part of the landscape. Beside the havoc wreaked by the automobile, however, planes and trains merely itch the nation's little toe. What the automobile has done is radically alter the topography of the land, re-shape the structure of cities, drastically influence work, housing and recreational habits, fill the air with carbon monoxide and other pollutants and, not least of all, significantly shape the nation's economy. It is this mixture of good and evil, of healthy, neutral and baneful influences which constitutes the problem. Clearly the automobile cannot be done away with; just as clearly its impact will have to be controlled.

One means of control would be increasingly stringent laws on the use of autos, limiting them eventually to those whose work makes them a necessity. But the automobile is too much a status symbol, too much a source of pleasure, for the American people ever to abide such draconian measures. Nor would massively heavy gasoline and excise taxes, high tolls and road-user taxes be tolerated either. The poor would justly complain and the auto-makers would, in this instance, be their loving allies. Direct control of automobile use would, in other words, have little chance of public acceptance.

The only solution, if there is one, lies in a successful implementation of the main purpose of the new Transportation Department: a coordinated national transportation system. The magnitude of this task is staggering. So far, there are very few cities which even have a coordinated system for their own metropolitan areas. A man can ship a package more quickly and cheaply across the length of Los Angeles than he could get himself across without a car.

Only the most drastic measures have been able to save two out of three of New York's major commuter lines to the suburbs. But the lack of coordinated metropolitan plans has a far greater social impact than meets the eye. Even if suburban areas were easily open to poor Negro residents, the general unavailability of cheap transportation to jobs would prevent many from moving. A major

ingredient in the Watts rioting was the impossibility for many Negroes of getting to those places where jobs might have been had. A well-heeled executive could easily commute by jet between New York and Chicago; an unskilled Negro worker could not afford to commute between his inner-city home and the airports in either metropolitan area.

These are some of the problems which the Transportation Department will have to confront. The automobile has not only succeeded in cluttering the highways, and in cluttering the cities and countryside with more highways, it has also tended to forestall imaginative efforts to develop cheap public transportation. The development of alternatives—subways, rapid surface transit, cheap commutation systems—is an answer to the automobile. Not the whole answer, but the beginning of one. The standard procedure now when there are transportation problems is to build a new superhighway. In the future, if the Department of Transportation is successful, such decisions may become less frequent. In the long run, it may be far cheaper to build a high-speed railroad track than a new road; less jarring to introduce cheap inter-urban helicopter service than cut a swath through settled neighborhoods for the sake of an elevated highway; less ugly to build subways than cut down trees.

LBJ GOES AWAY

Lyndon is taking a trip. That is nice. Ike went to Korea. JFK went to Ireland. It goes along with being President, like the White House and receiving cute letters from seven-year old girls who want to know if they can attend the Inaugural Ball. Of course, LBJ went to Mexico a while back, but that doesn't count because all Texans know that Latin America is just an extension of Texas except that it is underdeveloped because it doesn't have Dallas and Governor Connally and Senator John Tower and Mr. Dan Smoot.

So Lyndon is taking a trip. He will go to New Zealand and Australia. He will be photographed with Australia's Prime Minister Holt. (Australia has a general election a month from now. Funny thing.) He will confer. He will say that America will be resolute and that it will stand by its commitments and that it is doing everything in its power to make peace. He will be cheered by crowds, whose size the police will estimate. He may lay a wreath. He will be picketed. He will be on the front page of almost every U.S. newspaper. And, of course, he will also be on television.

Lyndon will go to Manila. He will confer. He will be photographed. He will say that America will be resolute and stands by its commitments and is doing everything it can to make peace. He will be cheered by crowds, and probably lay a wreath, and be picketed, and be on the front page of every U.S. paper. And on TV.

Next Lyndon will go to Thailand where he will be photographed but not picketed because Thailand is one of the dominoes of the free world and Thais who don't agree with Mr. Johnson go to jail. After that, Lyndon will go to Malaysia where he will be photographed and shown on TV being greeted by cheering crowds whose size the police will estimate. He will confer and say that America will be resolute and is doing everything possible to achieve peace.

Lyndon will go to South Korea next where he will be greeted by cheering crowds, and where he will confer. He will be photographed with Korean President Park who is currently trying to distract attention from an ugly scandal involving cabinet members and Korea's wealthiest businessman and who is (funny thing!) up for re-election next Spring. Lyndon will even stop in South Vietnam. He hadn't said he will stop there, but it turned out to be an excellent opportunity to lay a wreath and to confer and to point out that America is resolute and doing all it can to make peace. It will also put Lyndon on the front page of every U.S. paper and on TV—though this factor probably hadn't crossed his mind.

Finally, Lyndon will come home. He will be greeted at the airport, and be picketed. He will declare that America is doing all it can to make peace, and that it will be resolute and honor all the commitments he has just made in New Zealand and Australia and Manila and Thailand and Malaysia and South Korea. His homecoming will be the big news on TV and front-page material for every U.S. newspaper. It will be six days before election day. Funny thing.

THOSE HONOLULU HAMLETS

How go the "pacification" programs on which U.S. Vietnamese policy stakes so much? Here are some comments on the "rural development" program ballyhooed not long ago at Honolulu:

"In 1966, all provinces tried to implement their hamlet construction program as planned, but only a few were able to fulfill their promises."

"Most village and hamlet officials were appointed but not elected and many of them did not stay in the villages and hamlets to work."

"New Life Hamlets that had been declared as achieved were not up to the mark . . . Viet Cong underground agents still collected taxes and carried out propaganda activities."

"Arbitrary and corrupt practices were quite common and therefore brought about frustration among the people who in turn were doubtful about the good will of the government."

The source of these pessimistic conclusions? A report sent out to Vietnamese officials from Premier Nguyen Cao Ky.



ALL THINGS CONSIDERED **TO THE BISHOPS**

The annual meeting of the new American bishops' conference is scheduled to begin on November 14. For better or for worse, it could be one of the most important episcopal meetings in the history of the American Church. For better, if the bishops face the implications of Vatican II and seriously begin to apply them in this country. For worse, if the bishops ignore the great challenges entirely or settle for half-measures or pious platitudes.

What, specifically, should the bishops do? To begin with, I think the bishops should see the Vatican Council for what it was—a badly needed Council of Reform. The relevance of the Church to modern times is being seriously challenged; Vatican II was a beginning, but only a beginning, in a vital large-scale effort at updating, at *aggiornamento*. The initiative supplied by Pope John and Vatican II must now be carried forward in every area of the world and in every area of Catholic life. If this is not done, our post-conciliar state can be worse than our pre-conciliar condition. And in this process of application, the role of the bishops, both theologically and practically, is central. They could fail, as bishops once failed to meet the developing challenge in the time of Martin Luther; on the other hand, if they bring intelligence and imagination to their task, we could take a giant step forward, and very quickly.

A central part of the spirit of reform has to be a wholly new way of looking at the layman—or, more accurately, a return to an older and better way. The bishops have to face the fact that their office has, in a sense, been over-emphasized since the Protestant Reformation. An attack on the entire principle of episcopal authority led to great and, eventually, exaggerated stress on precisely this point inside the Church. The result was a great trend toward clericalism and a de-emphasis on the whole role of the layman. What we need now are efforts to achieve a proper balance and to restore the layman to his true dignity and function inside the Church.

It should be emphasized here that what is needed is not more rhetoric or fulsome tributes to the layman, pleasing as these may be. What is needed is creation. We need structures that will make it possible for the layman to share more fully in the deliberations of and responsibility for the Church. It is not enough to tell the layman to participate—*how* is he to do it? Here I think the American bishops should strongly encourage current efforts to apply collegiality on every level in the Church. If the Pope can share his authority with a Synod of Bishops, I see no reason authority cannot involve the “team” principle in religious communities, universities and colleges, parishes and Catholic organizations.

At the Council there was much talk about reform in the seminaries and religious communities, and in the Council documents there is at least the beginning of some guidance in these matters. I hope the American bishops will encourage such reforms in their own jurisdictions, and I hope reform-minded communities like the Glenmary Sisters will have some powerful and articulate defenders among the bishops. The zeal for reform is already well established in many American communities, especially those of women; it would be a tragedy if any more episcopal actions like those of Archbishop Alter curbed this spirit.

On the liturgy I would urge the bishops to encourage real flexibility and expert creativity. The changes in the Mass and the introduction of the vernacular were real helps, but they should not be viewed as the end of the line. The goal is a fully participating, fully worshipping layman. That we have not achieved yet, and we must keep on working.

Will the bishops resent suggestions from a layman as to what they should do? In this post-conciliar Church, I trust not. A questionnaire from *Overview*, the new Thomas More Association newsletter, recently asked for opinions on whether the bishops' meeting should be open to the press or not. The query is relevant to this point, I think. On the question itself I had mixed feelings. I'd like to see the American bishops engage in a frank exchange with each other; I'd like to see other bishops object to the extreme reaction of Los Angeles, for example; I'd like to see others queried about their inaction on the race question; I'd like to see Archbishop Alter congratulated for his parish councils and challenged for his restrictions on the Glenmary Sisters. In public, at least, the bishops behave toward each other too much like the members of a private club who never disagree with each other. If keeping the press out would encourage frankness, I would favor a private meeting.

But—and this is crucial—the bishops should not insulate themselves from the public, in Washington or at home. If their meetings are closed, the nature of the debate and direction of the discussions should be reported. The bishops should not resent but welcome public interest. Why not a panel of bishops to answer any and all questions by newsmen, frankly and openly, much like the very successful American press panel at the Council? For here perhaps is a central point in the whole discussion: we badly need more openness, more dialogue, more freedom in the Church. My hope is that at their November meeting the bishops will take the lead toward the achievement of these goals.

JAMES O'GARA

MALAMUD'S HEROES



The fate of fixers

JONATHAN BAUMBACH

One knows that it is not possible to write a contemporary American novel about a Jew accused of a ritual murder in Tsarist Russia, based on, of all things, a real-life persecution. The subject is too heavy, too square. The social injustice scene has gone the way of the Depression, the way of American innocence. The author of *The Grapes of Wrath*—the social conscience of our thirties—when not traveling around the country with his dog these days, makes statements defending the American war in Vietnam, putting the responsibility of American bombing on the Chinese. So much for social conscience! The contemporary mode is cool, impartially ironic about both victim and victimizer. Not so Bernard Malamud's fourth novel *The Fixer* (Farrar, Straus, \$5.75) which, like the earlier ones, is about the making of a hero. Alas, *The Fixer* demonstrates that what ought not to be possible in our literature is, when given life, unequivocally possible. A work of art creates its own fashion, prescribes itself.

New rhythms of experience, one hears oneself saying, demand new modes of response, which is one of those truths that is hard to distinguish from the cliché that impersonates it. The old ways of telling a story, one goes on, are out of date, no longer viable. The real issue, of course, is not whether a novel is new or not but whether it has life, and the novelists who have not sought new ways have for the most part written fiction of low vitality, which is to say that the evidence is empirical not absolute. I'm talking here about dead fiction which, like Goldwater conservatism, is not a tradition-based response to our reality but a programmatic denial of it. Ought in-

stead of is. Though set in Russia over fifty years ago, though it does nothing radically new with the form of the novel, *The Fixer* has life, is in its own quirky way an original—unfashionable though contemporary.

Malamud has published six books in fifteen years, four novels, two story collections, *The Magic Barrel* (1958) and *Idiots First* (1963). His reputation is highest at this point as a short story writer. With Flannery O'Connor, Peter Taylor, J. F. Powers, and Eudora Welty, he is one of our masters of the shorter form. Though unlike the others—the two forms require surprisingly different skills—he is also a novelist of considerable accomplishment.

All four of Malamud's novels are about the possibilities of heroism—heroism as the fulfillment of one's deepest calling. The hero discovers himself—his identity—by enacting his destiny. He tests the quality of his heroism in a mythic journey, which, for better or worse, is his life—ours. The history of the world is in the spirit of each of Malamud's heroes.

Allegorical Stomach-ache

If *The Natural* (1952), which is a kind of pop novel, an allegorical black comedy about a self-destructive baseball super-hero, were the latest and not the first, how in the mode Malamud would seem.

Roy Hobbs, the natural, (linguistically King Rustic, an analogue of Percival) is the first of Malamud's benighted fixers. A superstar with a predilection for destructive women, Roy sees himself in terms of his heroic destiny which is "to break every record in the book for throwing and hitting." It is a specifically American dream and one thinks of its corollary—Charlie Whitman's recent record in Austin, Texas. Roy, destiny's hero, tells his American

JONATHAN BAUMBACH is the author of *A Man To Conjure With* (Random House).

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dream to Harriet Bird ("certainly a snappy goddess"), destiny's destroyer. Harriet gives him the hero's reward, a silver bullet in the stomach. Record-breakers are made to be broken.

But destiny is destiny, calling is calling. Roy returns to baseball fifteen years later (resurrected) to be a rookie at thirty-four with the luckless N.Y. Knights. As soon as he gets a chance to play, the natural becomes a record breaker—a superstar—though "his accomplishments were not entirely satisfying to him. He was gnawed by a nagging impatience, so much more to do." The dream (American dream, dream of heroes) has in itself the seeds of its undoing—it is insatiable, presumptuous. Character is fate. Roy falls for another snappy goddess, Memo Paris (the same bird as Harriet, though in different plumage), who ultimately does him in.

Roy, close to winning the pennant (the grail of Malamud's allegory) for his manager Pop Fisher (the impotent fisher-king), stuffs himself with vast quantities of food served him by the temptress Memo until he explodes with an enormous stomach-ache. "He thought, I never did learn anything out of my past life, now I have to suffer again." The past revisits him.

Out of pride and blindness, Roy denies love (Iris Lemon) and pursues disaster (Memo). In wanting more than he has, in his perpetual dissatisfaction with what he has done, Roy denies himself. What more fatal?

The Natural stands up remarkably, seems if anything richer now, funnier, than when I first came to it ten years ago. A magical game, Malamud's baseball, though true in spirit. "He saw the ball spin off Roy's fingertips and it reminded him of a white pigeon he had kept as a boy, that he would send into flight by flipping it into the air. The ball flew at him and he was conscious of its bird form and white flapping wings, until it suddenly disappeared from view." A lovely novel.

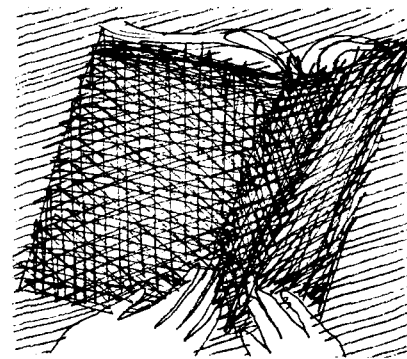
The occasion of each of Malamud's novels is different, though the voice is similar. The themes echo and re-echo. There is a movement away from irony (from *The Natural* to *The Fixer*) toward some kind of tragic mode, toward moral illumination.

Roy repeats his mistakes; Frank Alpine, the hero of *The Assistant* (1957), similarly self-destructive, learns from his, becoming at the end, through suffering, a good man. *The Assistant* has two central biographies—the life and death of Morris Bober, unwitting saint, and the guilt and retribution of Frank Alpine, saint-elect, the first life creating the pattern and possibility of the second. Frank, initially a thief, seeking penance, apprentices himself to the luckless, suffering Jewish storekeeper he has robbed.

A man who wants to be like Saint Francis, Frank is unable (until after Morris's death) to translate his good intentions into moral acts. Guilty of imperfection (the presumption of the romantic hero), Frank compulsively sins as a means of self-punishment. "He planned to kill himself, at the same minute had a terrifying insight: that all

the while he was acting like he wasn't, he was really a man of stern morality." His own most merciless judge, each time Frank steals from Morris's cash register, he torments himself with guilt. Moreover, he increases his debt, psychologically and financially, to the grocer, which means he must punish himself still further to make re-quit. As penitent, he must fall deeper and deeper into his interior hell before he can allow himself salvation. This is the pattern of his life and a central concern of the novel.

The Assistant is a claustrophobic work, beautifully economic in its rendering. A more realistic novel than *The Natural* but also fantastic, lyrical, dark, magical. About the transformation of a thief. In suffering for Morris, and in Morris's role for all of us, Frank becomes at last a wholly honest and good man. "Then one day, for no reason he could give, though the reason felt familiar, he stopped climbing up the air shaft to peek at Helen, and was honest in the store." In Frank's purification through pain and suffering, Malamud unites the disparate concerns of mythic ritual and conventional realism. It is well to mention that much of the beauty of *The Assistant* is in Malamud's marvelous evocation of the grocery which, conducted by ritual, has the aura of a sacred place, Morris's tomb, Frank's monastery—the church of his redemption.



His third novel *A New Life* (1961) was an ambitious change of pace for Malamud, an attempt (as I wrote in an earlier piece) "to extend the range of his concerns beyond the impulse of his talent." About the reclamation of S. Levin, former drunkard and potential suicide (presently Instructor of Composition at Cascadia College), *A New Life* has some of the same magical qualities that make the first two novels and the best of the stories at once so touching and funny. Where the novel goes dead, I feel, is in the literalness of its realism—the scenes of academic "life" (the internal politics of the Cascadia English Department) have the quality of transcription rather than vision.

Despite the flatness of his occasion, S. Levin, who came "to believe that life is holy," is a compellingly sympathetic character. Beginning his new life as a teacher of composition at a Humanities-less state college, Levin becomes involved in the mystery of his predecessor Duffy's un-

happy fate—"a broken man, the shadow of himself, quickly abandoned by all." As Frank with Morris, Levin discovers the mystery of Duffy's failed career by enacting it as if it were his own destiny. But Levin is luckier than Duffy, braver—for him, defeat becomes a triumph. He redeems Duffy's failure by transcending the broken pattern of his predecessor's life—Duffy the prophet, the father of Levin's heroism. "He felt like a man entering a new life and entered."

At its best, *A New Life* deals with Levin's double search for self and love and his guilt-ridden love affair with Pauline Gilley, the wife of the man who has given him his job. When, in a magical scene, Pauline offers herself to Levin in the woods, Malamud's refugee from the tenements of New York achieves momentarily the fulfillment of his romantic quest. "He was throughout conscious of the marvel of it—in the open forest, nothing less, what triumph!"

The Fixer is closer to the heart of Malamud's vision—Yakov's fate larger, more heartbreaking, than Levin's. Deserted by his wife, Yakov Bok, an unemployed fixer (sort of a carpenter), leaves the ghetto he has lived in the thirty years of his life to make some future for himself in the outside world. "The fixer was troubled by discontent, a deeper sense that he had no choice about going than he wanted to admit." Bitterness leads to self-denial. Having difficulty finding work in Kiev, the fixer finds it propitious—it is a time of rampant anti-Semitism in Russia—to hide the fact of his Jewishness. Sinning against himself, Yakov creates the occasion of his victimization.

A twelve year-old boy is found grotesquely murdered—the blood drained from his body—and Yakov, the only Jew living in the area (a district forbidden to Jews) is picked up for the murder. "The fixer readily confessed he was a Jew. Otherwise he was innocent."

Though the setting is Russia and not Cascadia College—and Yakov's trials are much darker than S. Levin's—the two Malamud heroes have surprisingly much in common—the inner voice, the luminous nightmares, the obsessive integrity, the belief that life is holy, the destiny of a hero. The fixer's heroism is not willful, but cumulative, a discovery that if he is to be his own man, he must take responsibility for (to use Levin's pun) his "manifest destiny." "What choice does a man have who doesn't know what his choices are?"

For all its framing of evidence, the prosecution is unable to assemble a case strong enough to bring an indictment against the fixer for, as it would like to prove, ritual murder. So Yakov is kept in prison under the most inhumane conditions, hostage to the malice of his persecutors for two years ("He thought that whenever he had been through the worst, there was always worse"), tormented and bullied in order to force him into confession. The more Yakov is tormented, however, the tougher he becomes, frustrating his persecutors who feel victimized by their inability to break his spirit. When they offer him

a pardon to save face—one of a number of acts of official desperation—he turns it down, insisting he wants the opportunity of a fair trial. In accepting the role thrust upon him by circumstance, by choosing the integrity of his destiny, Yakov becomes a hero.

As Yakov grows wiser in his sense of himself, the novel becomes richer. The end is brilliantly conceived. On his way to be tried, the fixer confronts the Tsar in the vengeance of his imagination. The Tsar asks to be understood, to be pitied for the difficulty of his role—"to rule is to bear a heavy cross." Yakov is unforgiving, holds him accountable. "Pointing the gun at the Tsar's heart . . . Yakov pressed the trigger. Nicholas, in the act of crossing himself, overturned his chair, and fell, to his surprise, to the floor, the stain spreading on his breast."

"As for history, Yakov thought, there are ways to reverse it. What the Tsar deserves is a bullet in the gut. Better him than us."

"Where there's no fight for it, there's no freedom."

The Fixer is unfashionable in the sense that it eschews fashion altogether. Malamud's novels, with the partial exception of *The Natural*, are about transcendence, about the exemplary heroism of enacting one's role. Frank Alpine, S. Levin, Yakov Bok, even the comic artist manqué, Fidelman, of several of the stories, offer us in the courage of their lives, alternatives for us in ours. The pleasure of Malamud's fiction is in the texture of the writing, the richness of idiom, the heartbreaking pathos turned on its side by irony; also—and crucially in *The Fixer*—in the vision.

If we are to be better men—wiser, stronger, more loving—someone must show us how it's done. Heroism is to make moral art of the self. Malamud is a didactic writer, a moralist. His three successful novels and at least ten of the stories give the pleasure of art to the moral possibilities of life. He dreams the dream of our failed heroism and conceives us better men for having risked defeat. It is an optimistic vision, and one hopes—on the other side is more pogroms, more genocide, more Vietnams—that we can live up to it.

It takes either courage or madness to write about the dignity of the individual in the United States in the year of our Lord 1966. *The Fixer* is a passionate novel in a cool time—a brave book.

KARL PATTEN

POETRY

The single swimmer,
Arm-length after arm-length measuring the current,
Sprawls at last on the sand.
His eyes are gone totally, black and blind.
So, weathering himself together in his bulk,
He turns himself into a rock—
He has become Homer.



REACTIONARY REVOLUTION



The Catholic literary revival in France

LOUIS ALLEN

Is it possible to be both intelligent and a Catholic? The question is not new, and invariably sounds priggish. It must be put, though, at certain moments of the Church's history—and at no time with more anguish than when looking at the half century or so immediately before the First World War, the period of a great revival of Catholic literature in France. Because that revival derived much of its strength from its opposition to a positivist materialism and a powerful anti-clerical republicanism, it tended to be excessively combative and vulgarly polemical in tone; and some of its most cherished beliefs were singularly naïve.

The great names are well known: Huysmans, Bloy, Péguy, Claudel. It is interesting to see the things they shared with writers who are now forgotten—and eminently forgettable—such as Adolphe Retté, Emile Baumann and Ernest Hello, and how ideas which seem unbearably paradoxical in Claudel can be explained historically by reference to theories initiated by very minor writers indeed.

Early in the nineteenth century, there had been a return to the faith based on purely aesthetic grounds. For Chateaubriand, the emotional appeal of the Christian past would turn a post-revolutionary generation away from unbelief and back to the faith of their fathers. There were some conspicuous successes; but the case for reason and the intellect was fatally weakened at a time of triumphant scientific and rationalist criticism of religion and Catholic thinkers were pushed to the opposite extreme. So a hostility to the intellect is a major feature of the Catholic revival or, as Richard Griffiths prefers to call it in the title of his book, *The Reactionary Revolution* (Ungar, \$9.).

LOUIS ALLEN writes for English journals and presently contributes a quarterly survey of French literature to *New Blackfriars*.

Admittedly he is concerned with France alone, but since France has more often than not been the focus of Catholic thinking in Europe, it is all the more distressing when she reneges—or, more accurately, fails to live up to what we expect of her.

As a revolution, the Catholic revival attacked the established materialist and secularist order of the society of its day. It was reactionary in that it proposed no new solution to the problems of that society, but instead turned its face resolutely backwards towards a mythical past characterized in theory by order and tradition and in practice by sentimental piety and chauvinism. Charles Péguy, for instance, praises Michelet's *History of France* for a genius which transcends the mere intelligent fact-grubbing of the ordinary historian: "All the intelligent people we know—and it's a species that pullulates in Paris—have an undying hatred for genius and works of genius. It is perhaps the only genuine emotion they have."

The only modern man whose views can be relied on is, of course, the sturdy, honest peasant. "In Jean Nesmy's novel *Les Egarés*," writes Mr. Griffiths, "the peasants are not taken in at all by intellectual arguments in favor of pacifism, put forward by a young schoolmaster. The meeting breaks up in disorder amidst shouts of 'Vive l'armée! Vive la France!' Their natural instinct, we are told, was the right one: 'It was the answer of simple people to the insults of intellectuals . . .'"

The simple approach, inevitably, was the only possible one in religion, and the new biblical exegesis was roughly handled: "It's a very pretty thing, this new school of exegesis," writes Léon Bloy, "There are priests who think, in defiance of the Council of Trent, that there is something better than the Vulgate. I know one who can't sleep at night because of the tail of Tobias's dog." Such

exegesis is, he says, "The negation of Scripture, pure and simple. The faith has never been in greater danger." Objections to what were, no doubt, in the hands of a Loisy, definite excesses, were not matched in his critic by simple adherence to the words of Scripture. On the contrary, Bloy himself indulged in a very idiosyncratic metaphorical interpretation of the Bible based on that of the Abbé Tardif de Moidrey, for whom every word of scriptural text was a direct metaphor for the Trinity.

Maudlin Forms of Devotion

Hostility towards any but a purely figurative exploration of Scripture was accompanied by an uncritical acceptance of the more maudlin forms of popular devotion and chiliastic prophecy. Bloy was utterly convinced not only of the revelations of La Salette, but also of the prophetic visions of his mistress, the redeemed prostitute Anne-Marie Roulé, who predicted to him the imminent arrival of the Holy Spirit, before she was finally certified as insane.

Oddly enough, reverence for the clergy seems to have been lacking. The second of Mélanie's revelations at La Salette begins: "By their wicked lives, their lack of reverence and their impiety in celebrating the sacred mysteries, by their love of money, of honors and pleasures, priests have become cesspits of impurity." It is hardly surprising that Bloy, obsessed as he was with La Salette, should adopt the millenarian tone in his own vision of the death of Leo XIII, guilty of the appalling crime of wanting French Catholics to come to terms at last with the republic:

At the moment of writing, the successor of Pius IX is at the point of death. Perhaps he is already dead and face to face with God. What will he say to the Shepherd Who will ask for the return of His flock? Will this dissipator of the *Syllabus* make this tremendous declaration to his Judge? . . . 'Because of me, France is in despair. The dangers of my republican doctrines and the utter abomination of my pontifical inertia have been a scandal such as the world has never seen . . . '

This is mild beside the virulence—inherited directly from Louis Veuillot—of Léon Daudet or the wretched Drumont. The most infamous anti-Semite of his age, Drumont exemplifies another inglorious tendency of French Catholic writing at this time. It is difficult to understand the Dreyfus affair unless one realizes the extent to which even the best Catholic minds had been eaten away by constant reiteration of some of the beastliest nonsense of the nineteenth century. It was all, as Drumont saw it, in the service of God (and, of course, France, though the two were not clearly distinct). And God was most ungrateful to him, as he himself pointed out later when he went blind: "How can God have done this to me—to me, Drumont, after all I've done for Him!"

In the case of Huysmans, anti-Semitism even spoils one

of the valuable elements in the revival: the revulsion from popular religious art. Appalled by the *bondieusarderies* of Lourdes, and convinced that such a depravation of religious art can only be the result of satanic inspiration (like the Second Coming, the Devil was always just around the corner), he goes on to suggest that it must be the Jews who are responsible for the production of these supposedly pious objects and that their purpose is a fresh betrayal of the Messiah.

In its linking of Catholic thought with anti-intellectualism, bogus occultism, chauvinism and a determined flight from the modern world, much of Mr. Griffiths' story is familiar ground. There is one part of the book, though, which has a more technical interest for students of French literature. The section entitled "Vicarious Suffering" gives an account of a doctrine—"mystical substitution"—based originally on perfectly orthodox Christian teaching: the offering of suffering as reparation for the sins of others. The political atmosphere of France at this time gave this doctrine a peculiar twist. In moments of crisis or defeat (in 1870 as in 1940), there was a positive jamboree of national breast-beating and an assumption that military defeat was a divine punishment for republicanism, freemasonry, freethinking and so on. Reparation for sin through suffering and degradation became not only a weapon against the republic. Elaborated in the work *De la Douleur* by the philosopher Blanc de Saint-Bonnet, it was to take a curious and obscene turn in the teachings of the sinister Abbé Boullan.

Interchangeable Sin

Boullan was a follower of the Norman visionary, Eugène Vintras, the founder of a new sect dedicated to a belief in an imminent Second Coming, who was imprisoned for fraud in 1842 after the Bishop of Bayeux had seized hundreds of the bleeding hosts which were his stock in trade. Diffused to a wide audience through his periodical *Annales du Sacerdoce*, Boullan's theories start with the notion that suffering can be almost mechanically *transferred* from one person to another. Sickness and sin are interchangeable, and it becomes possible to transfer not only another person's sickness, but also sins and temptations, by contact with sanctified objects—consecrated wine at first, and later Boullan's own fearful mixtures of consecrated host, urine and excrement. Physical contact is necessary, and this leads to "Unions de Vie": in effect sexual acts, the "ruin of Eden" redeemed by spiritual contacts with a higher being, such as his own with Adèle Chevalier, a young lay sister from a convent near Soissons whose child he murdered one morning after Mass. It was with great difficulty that such an acute observer of occult and satanic practices as Huysmans was brought to believe that Boullan was not the maligned and saintly founder of the *Oeuvre de la Réparation* but a practitioner—self-deceived or not—of sacrilegious obscenities.

The sexual implications of the "Unions de Vie" were not seen by many learned and holy people, and Boullan's charlatanism had a considerable success. It is not difficult, as Mr. Griffiths shows, to trace to such dubious roots Claudel's ideas of reparation as worked out, for instance, in *L'Annonce faite à Marie*. Violaine, the heroine of this play, contracts leprosy as a result of a kiss of compassion, and as the disease rots her body away, it gradually disappears from the man she had kissed, she is enabled to bring back to life her sister's dead child, and a great cathedral is completed as (and, we are led to believe, *because*) life finally ebbs from her. Her role has affinities with that of Celia in *The Cocktail Party*. Somehow the sieve of Claudel's genius has removed the filth and silliness and produced a work of religious art: a rose from a dunghheap. Fortunately this is also the case with several of the plays and novels which form a large part of Mr. Griffiths' theme: their source may be distressing, or just

silly, but here and there they have been redeemed by the manipulation of the artist.

Were this not so, the Catholic Revival as Mr. Griffiths depicts it would seem rather like a bad dream, the more so since he recounts the absurd or unspeakable views of his subjects in a flat, deadpan, scholarly calm; it would have been preferable to have been told more of the dissenting voices, like Paul Vulliaud's *La Crise Organique de l'Eglise en France* or Léon Chaine's *Les Catholiques français et leurs difficultés actuelles*. It helps one's sanity to realize that although the age produced a young de Gaulle with a view of France very like that of Péguy, for whom "among all the modern races, the only visible chosen one is the French race," there were other young men whose vision would transcend the oddities of their times: Teilhard de Chardin, Louis Massignon, Jacques Maritain. Yes, we have come through. But only by the skin of our teeth.

A new point of view

THE NEW BOHEMIA



WILLIAM JAMES SMITH

Everybody knows *where* the New Bohemia is—that region of tenements and shabby little parks and old churches to the East of Greenwich Village. It is an area that seems charming to the children of the middle class and revolting to the old people who have been unable to move out to Forest Hills. It is classically the area where Jewish youngsters rent apartments—pads—that their grandparents fled with rejoicing fifty years ago. It is, according to its resident artists and writers and musicians and freakniks, the Creative Heart of America. And, of course, there are aspiring little branch offices in most of the bigger cities across the country.

The question is, *what* the New Bohemia is, its own opinion aside. John Gruen's *The New Bohemia* (Shorecrest, \$4.95) offers one answer. Mr. Gruen who is from the Heartland himself, formulates the suggestion that the New Bohemians are the "combine generation." This awkward phrase means that the creative people of the New Bohemia are working toward a synthesis of the arts. This is something new in esthetic history—a new way of life no less.

As to the new way of life, it is about as new as that of Rudolpho and Mimi, at best. Beards and messy kitchens aren't really very new. Well, yes, LSD is new, but I am

beginning to suspect apropos that great new kick that the first caveman who took a swig of fermented cider woke up the next morning and said, "Honey, this has changed my way of life!" I think most of these trips don't get much further than Newark. Psychedelic schmychedelic. So there are worse places than Bellevue!

As to new forms of art, maybe the New Bohemia really does have something there. I make the admission grudgingly, and with some embarrassment, since all of these new theories of art do *sound* pretty silly. But the artists of the New Bohemia have done something, if only it was to get pictures out of frames and statues off pedestals and to remind us that veneration of the monuments of art may be good enough for the public, but it is fatal for the artist.

As the lowing herd was winding slowly o'er the lea the other evening, I wound my way into the graveyard of St. Mark's in the Bouwerie, jumping respectfully across Peter Stuyvesant, and settled down to enjoy a jazz concert in the best modern manner. After the musicians had tuned up for a half hour or so I realized that they weren't tuning up at all—this was the concert. It was quite mad, but nobody seemed to care—one way or the other. Tiptoeing out, I got hung up on what seemed to be an innertube hanging from a tree. The young man at the gate guarding a crockery pot from urchins respected my disinclination to contribute to the musicians' fund.

WILLIAM JAMES SMITH, a free-lance writer and critic, contributes frequently to these pages.

Immediately afterwards the same evening I attended my first real treat of underground movies and I discovered in a matter of moments how to handle *that* phenomenon. Go with an open mind and close your eyes tightly. Most of the underground movies are mercifully without sound tracks. Smoke a lot. You can always blame the headache on the cigarettes.

Nevertheless. They have something, those New Bohemians. What was it I said they had? Oh, yes, audacity, irreverence. What they have most of all is cool. All of their psychic energy goes into maintaining this cool. At the end of the day they are *beat*. Cool really takes something out of you. Imagine a whole day of not getting annoyed with squares! They're everywhere! With their rotten clean fingernails and their stink of deodorants!

Nevertheless. Audacity. Irreverence. Mr. Gruen is more than willing to admit that when it comes to the new music the only people who can be said to enjoy it are the performers. Mr. Gruen, in his paean of praise for the New Bohemia, seems every now and then to glance over his shoulder with a frightened twitch and mutter, "What am I *doing* here? Me with my wife, kids and dachshund."

Nevertheless. There are Happenings! Now we have come to the heart of the New Bohemia, and a jolly irreverent heart it is. This is when everybody goes to a loft and acts silly with a straight face, if possible, and you break up a lot of cheap props and slap paint on things and do the nastiest thing you can think of on the spur of the moment and nobody can tell the actors from the audience. Gongs are struck unrhythmically. The combine generation in action! But I wonder, come to think of it, if Happenings are art? Maybe they're just parlor games? The thing is, you couldn't get a rise out of a New Bohemian on the question. What does it matter whether it's art or not? If you're having a good time, enjoy yourself, if you don't like it, stay away. What could be more reasonable, coming from those so defiantly unreasonable types? If you don't have a point of view you're invulnerable to attack.

Well, the New Bohemians do have a point of view, one anyway. It is that life and art must be drawn more closely together. It is possible to disentangle this idea from the cottonwool of their thinking, and the ideal is a noble one—all kidding aside, as we used to say in the old days. Art finally bursting the bonds of Aristotle—no longer an imitation of life, but Life itself, the McCoy. As some of those kooky Orientals are reputed to say, "We have no art, we try to do everything as well as possible." Maybe amended in the New Bohemia to read, "We have no life, we try to do everything as artfully as possible." That seems to be the crux of it. Reaching out for real life the New Bohemian ends up with nothing at all—not life at all but a plaster cast of life. Not with a whimper but with a dissonance. As he stands in the tattered remnants of his Happening he is not surrounded by life or even the debris of life. Real life consists of staying

home and watching the Real McCoys on telly. In a sense the combine generation's greatest admirers are those who ignore it. Which I guess those hippies (*there's* an old-fashioned word for you!) would agree with right down to their freaking boots. Everybody's happy.

Except me. I really do think they have something somewhere in all that silliness and all that verbiage and it annoys me that they—or I—can't extricate it. The old ambivalence. Like Marshall McLuhan, I don't agree with my point of view. I *know* I shouldn't try to extricate it, but I think maybe *that* is life too, wanting to reason. But I expect I'll just have to wait till it filters up to me.



JOANNE CHILDERS

THE WHITE GARMENT

Outside the window of my labor room
A chilly blast of sun
Illuminates the Southern blooms,
Magnolia and the celebrating dogwood,
Turned white too soon, too soon edged brown.

This bloom I think is obvious and cruel,
Is birth and death and innocence,
Is my white garment sopped with stain,
Tied in the back and open-aired,
Edged gaudy for the burst of March.

Baptismal day is swaddled, gone,
But I, a temple frothed in lace,
Was pale as the peak of paradise,
For the photograph shows clear these twenty years
And the bronze bell tolls the years away.

And when the Host perched on my lily tongue
At eight my face, my veil were candle-light,
And pristine as the Paraclete my gown,
Devoid of image of the fruit and flower
While thin notes on the organ broke like ice.

Into blossoms, into naked vows,
Tintless for my purity,
I married by the six-branch candle-stick,
Not simpering nor blushing, jeweled in stars,
And not suspicious of the sacrifice.

But now I lie here clock-wise, cold with pain,
In a gown with a stamp on linen red with stain,
And watch the buds with the edge of brown
Where there will be no quick return . . .

'Til they trundle me off to a blueish room
Where a doctor green and masked and capped
Delivers my daughter with crimson gloves.

THREE COMEDIES

THE SCREEN

A trio of new comedies is on our screens, films that are not of the something-for-everybody school but are of the brazen-and-brash variety—for audiences who can take this sort of thing. Since *Everyman* has his own ideas on what's funny, comedies are the most difficult to recommend. My favorite among these latest explorations into hilarity is "Georgy Girl," a British picture about a big, unhandsome, rather gawky girl who's as zany as all getout but has a heart of gold that makes her almost radiant at times.

Lonely, erratic in behavior and dress, Georgy flits from person to person striving to do good and be liked. But, as she says, she's always left holding the baby. And in this case, she literally is. She shares an apartment with Meredith, a sleek, self-centered, sexy babe whose promiscuity with boy friends astounds Georgy. One of them, Jos, who's even wackier in his way than Georgy is in hers, gets Meredith pregnant and proposes they get married this time and have the baby. Georgy continues to live with them, falls in love with Jos who finds her much more compatible than his wife, and in no time Georgy mothers the baby while Meredith goes her merry way and eventually moves out of the picture leaving Georgy with baby and Jos.

While this plot (and there's much more involving a middle-aged man who wants Georgy as his mistress) doesn't make much sense, the script, written by Margaret Forster and Peter Nichols, is quite witty with its ludicrous lines and situations. And Silvio Narizzano, in directing his first movie, uses his cast well to stress the humor but still manages to strike a poignant and serious note every now and then in telling the story of a girl who is more than an amoral kook. Lynn Redgrave is first-rate as big-hearted, imposed-upon Georgy who underestimates herself but whose virtues far exceed her transgressions. Alan Bates is fine as Jos, a modern Peter Pan who's fun to have around but would be impossible to live with for very long. James Mason is just right as the man who finds Georgy desirable and finally succumbs to her demands. If all this sounds at times a little bit like "The Knack" and other of Richard Lester's far-out romps, you're right: "Georgy Girl" is another picture of our unbalanced times. Or, as Georgy's father puts it: "I sometimes wonder *to what* this country's coming."

"Any Wednesday," based on Muriel Resnik's play, is also about a fey sort of girl who disconnects her lovelife from reality. In fact she disconnects most everything from reality and becomes the mistress of an industrial tycoon only because he filled her New York apartment with bal-

loons—which she adores. He then had one of his companies buy her cooperative apartment and turn it into an executive suite which he visits every Wednesday for a little extra-curricular activity while escaping from his wife and kids in suburbia. On the stage, this slight, rather amusing play had its charming moments thanks mainly to the young actresses (Sandy Dennis, then Barbara Cook) who played the lead. But the film, slicked up and bigger than life with its enormous close-ups, exposes what shoddy stuff all this is. Jane Fonda, as the mistress, is more calculating than wacky; and Jason Robards, as the ill-tempered tycoon having only one thing in mind while visiting the executive suite, hardly seems the Don Juan who would captivate this girl. "Any Wednesday" has its amusing scenes whenever Rosemary Murphy, in an excellent performance as the tycoon's wife, brightens the screen, particularly the long, game-playing episode when she and the young man from Akron (Dean Jones) and the two leads are confined in a cab during another New York blackout. Except for its frank subject matter, "Any Wednesday" is as colorless as the old parlor-bedroom-and-bath early talkies and as gassy as the balloons Miss Fonda finally lets escape.

By far the funniest, silliest, giddiest, bawdiest movie now on our screens is "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." Right from the beginning with Zero Mostel singing "Comedy Tonight" to the finale with the entire cast giving out with the same song, "Forum" is what used to be called a laff-riot. This is a modern laff-riot with a clever script, written by Melvin Frank (who also produced) and Michael Pertwee, based on the stage musical comedy; an outstanding cast that also includes Jack Gilford, Phil Silvers, Buster Keaton, and many more comedians; and most important of all the free-wheeling direction of Richard Lester who goes even farther out in this burlesque on the toga-and-sandal epics than he went in "The Knack" and the Beatle films.

Actually "Forum" razzes more than Roman spectacles. It takes a sock at pretty musicals with its poetic shots of the hero and heroine (Michael Crawford and Annette Andre) singing "Lovely" which are lusciously satirized later by Mostel and Gilford. It puts the Student-Prince type of operettas in their place with the wonderfully slapstick scene showing the grand entry of victorious Miles Gloriosus (Leon Greene) who does a take-off on all the very masculine baritones through the years. And it kids a variety of entertainments from modern sexy films (in its display of courtesans) to Gilbert and Sullivan plots (in the ridiculous finale when Keaton discovers who his long-lost kids are). "Forum" is also satirizing the Plautus school of Roman comedies in its outrageously off-color wisecracks. But since the jokes are so obviously burlesque, (like the crack about Miles who "raped Thrace thrice"), one has to take them in the tone that's being offered.

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Lester used so much imagination in his direction and was so greatly helped by film editor John Victor Smith in scenes that hurriedly made their point and then ran on to the next one that I wish these two experts had shortened that long, long chariot chase. Even funny slapstick chases can pall. But who's to argue about what's funny—especially with the masters. And “A Funny Thing” is indeed a very funny thing.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

SPEECH IMPEDIMENT



THE STAGE

One of the least discussed, and for all I know the least significant, developments in literary technology is the ever increasing efficiency of modern mimicry. Of course there have always been the great specialists, the Lardners and Wodehouses: but most writers used to be able to rub along on two languages, middle-class and all-purpose lower. One for upstairs, one for down. Bernard Shaw made a big thing of his philology, but most of his people still talked basic-Wimbledon and the rest struggled with a highly-suspect cockney (if Shaw's cockney is correct, there has been a total revolution in this dialect: a possibility, of course). And other writers were a sight less painstaking than Shaw.

This kind of slapdashery has probably gone forever, along with the hoop-embroidered essay and the unresearched historical novel. It is unlikely that any contemporary would try to get away with the pidgin-Spanish of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, or the broad regional kidding of so many middle-brow novels. There are now dozens of writers who mimic better than Shaw on his best day, and they have raised the bar for the others.

A recent victim of this hoist in standards is Brian Friel, whose play “The Loves of Cass Maguire” trips over a problem that probably wasn't there twenty years ago. The weakest scene in Friel's estimable first play, “Philadelphia Here I Come,” gave us an American woman returning to Ireland. Here he has expanded this scene into three acts. And his American imitation just isn't good enough for a whole evening's work.

It might be barely good enough to get a rise out of an American visitor in an Irish pub (I have been listening to such imitations all my life, and they get a rise precisely because they are always half-a-note off key); it might be good enough for a tourist's souvenir of “Yankee-land.” But for a central character who has allegedly lived over here for 52 years, it is much too showy and self-conscious. The references to Ed Sullivan and Radio City Music Hall are plainly put in for window-dressing; the joke-introduction that goes, “as the broad said to the senator” should return to its original form, “as the actress said to the

bishop.” A different mode of thought is involved.

Mr. Friel probably knows this country pretty well, but this is just the point where a budding linguist is most vulnerable—the point where he thinks he has the idioms down cold. (Hilaire Belloc was so superstitious about this that he would not write so much as a postcard in French: a language he part grew up in.) The easy mistake with American is to suppose that it is entirely made up of colorful expressions—these being the ones that lodge deepest in the ear; and worse, that any expression will do, so long as it is colorful.

These transatlantic malapropisms would be enough to hurt any play's credentials. But in “Cass Maguire” they have a doubly bad effect. Because the story is told from Cass's point of view: and since she is linguistically improbable, she is also an improbable observer. She has returned to Ireland after a long exile in America—but we know right off that she hasn't really been in America: she is a personification of what an Irish family would expect to get back from America, with their Ed Sullivans and their high living and all.

If the play had been done straight from the family's point of view, it might have been pretty funny. But with jovial hubris, Mr. Friel has tried to get inside the Irish-American character instead, which gives the play a fictitious center, and an angle of vision from which everything else looks fictitious too. So many things go wrong with this play that I may return to it again in another context—not to belabor Mr. Friel, but to see, as one does with good writers, how his mistakes help to define his talent. (*At the Helen Hayes*)

The trouble with the mimicry boom is that there is now a whole school of writers who can do nothing else—or at least who always fall back on it to finesse their writing problems. “The Killing of Sister George” is a case in point. This is one of those English variety shows, full of impersonations, topical gags and snippets of pop culture, that chronically threatens to turn into a play, but veers off instead into one more number.

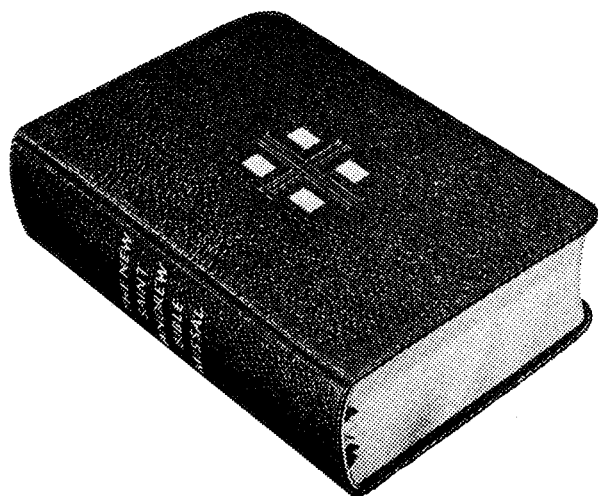
It might have been a good play at that. Sister George is a kindly soap-opera character, played by a salty cigar-chomping Lesbian whose public and private roles have worked into a weird tangle. She also boasts a morally underprivileged roommate, and the relationship between these two is where your play would lie, if there was a play.

But too many of the gags are extraneous, and they chip away at the running time, until all that remains of the central theme is the outline of a black soap opera. The two actresses, Beryl Reid and Eileen Atkins, are so good that there often seems to be more going on than there actually is. It is a bit like visiting interesting people on an off-evening—you know they are interesting, even though they are not doing anything interesting at the particular moment. (*At the Belasco*) WILFRID SHEED

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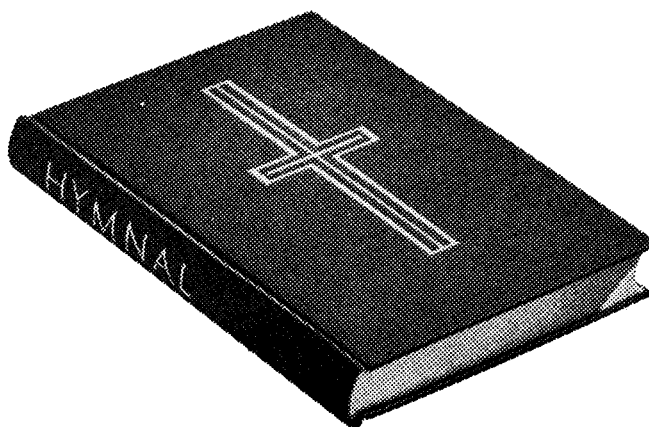
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BOOKS

The toil of the literary ombudsman

Standards

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

Horizon, \$6.75

ERIK WENSBERG

Stanley Edgar Hyman does not include in this selection from his work as chief book reviewer for *The New Leader* any review of a book of someone's book reviews; I can't in fact recall whether he wrote such a piece during his four years on the job. If that is a warning, I'll ignore it, for no matter how thin the air becomes, out here at two removes from literature, we can with this book contemplate for a moment the record in outline of the best regular magazine book reviewer we have. Or we had, for Mr. Hyman has withdrawn from the job for now.

As should be plain, to speak of "the best regular magazine book reviewer we have" is by no means the same as speaking of the most productive Portuguese-American ceramicist now working in tiles. The regular magazine book reviewer stands, after all, in a peculiarly urgent relation to his clientele, like an Ombudsman or a water-diviner. Reviewers for daily papers—familiar, driven, predictable—do not count in this. When the late Randall Jarrell remarked that he knew couples who had replaced their priest with a literary critic, one supposed that he meant, not I. A. Richards, but the weekly, bi-weekly or monthly regular reviewer, the earlier Edmund Wilson, Philip Toynbee in the London *Observer*, or Mr. Hyman as he would appear in *The New Leader*.

These are the dignified spiritual intruders, not warbling every morning, not putting it only in books for the ages, but periodically pronouncing every two weeks, draining the swamp and getting the mind moving again. To give trust to one is to invite a beneficial dependence, for he can keep us honest through all our lapses in the coils of the sly, the now ubiquitous printed word.

Naturally, we resent this. Some have appealed to competitive precedent, saying of Hyman, "Well, he isn't as good as Wilson was in the old *New Yorker*." This is nonsense. As a reviewer Hyman is exactly as able as Wilson was, and this book quite as distinguished as Wilson's *Classics and Commercials*. Even the flaws correspond: pieces of judicious praise (Hyman on I. B. Singer; Wilson on Evelyn Waugh) seem, at a remove of years, a trace owlsh; Wilson's adamantine upper lip in those days seems as often a tic as Hyman's somewhat automatic attacks of dolor about his own times and our prospects (if he will abjure the phrase "the human condition," we'll all feel better); and Wilson's stand-by Freudianism from the Forties can even now send his doughty heir riding on past equally interesting sides of a book or a story.

Indeed, Hyman could in general curb the intuitions of myth and symbol to which his considerable learning so easily lead him. Though often apt, they too readily entice, for instance, to a page-long raveling of Djuna Barnes' *Antiphon* that gives no hint whether that play is good or bad; or to a bewitched overestimate of William Golding's *The Spire*, exactly because of its tinker-toy contrivance of symbol and biblical reference: Golding's game exactly, but it was Golding's downfall.

It may also be confusing two functions for our preceptor to state, in otherwise admirably sensible essays, that both Daniel Fuchs and James Baldwin have failed to understand their respective "literary traditions." Now if one could just get these fellows to read the syllabus: that manner is common enough, but Mr. Hyman is uncommon and does not need to be fogged with the perfumes of the lamp. Indeed, to throw off other small pedantries, let him disallow advisors addicted to fuller explanations. "As Ike watches the dawn rise, Faulkner writes him an idiot *aubade*, the lover's dawn song." Surely it wasn't Hyman the authentic stylist who

appended the bang-bong, tin-can phrase.

But of course the main point is simply that Mr. Hyman has been nearly always right in his judgments of particular books. More exactly, if he isn't always right about just what has made a book good, the fault is one of emphasis in a manifold argument; and he is infallible on what makes a book bad. He has not only kept his head about John Cheever, while all about him haven't, but he perfectly catches Cheever's fatal penchant in his novels for having character and meaning all ways at once. Hyman's review of Herman Wouk's *Youngblood Hawke* is a fleeting piece of literary diabolism to set even the righteous on a tremble. And his essay on Philip Roth's work to date is so fair, so exact and so elegantly organized as to achieve the highly unlikely effect, in this sort of writing, of suspense. (Roth is saved at the end, on conditions.)

It is for older books in new editions that Hyman reserves his most eloquent praise, and he is a man who can praise irresistibly. If some of his touchstones aren't mine, I am no less swept along by his wonder and delight in Eca de Queiroz' novels, in Jane Harrison's *Themis*, in Sologub. I miss in this book only Hyman's charming essay on an English travel writer we both like, Anthony Carson, the baggy pilgrim.

Range, learning, poise, concision, deep feeling and a natural voice—these are what made Hyman during those four years the best regular magazine reviewer in the country. One hopes he will reconsider the task. Like Edmund Wilson, he writes better books than reviews; and so should everyone. But *Standards* can hold its exemplary own beside *The Armed Vision* and *The Tangled Bank* quite as easily as *The Shores of Light* does beside *Axel's Castle*. Hyman's sane and measured thought is a valuable presence in any form. Future editions could even retain the woozy little typo on page 118. It comes immediately before a line by E. E.

Cummings and adds extra rightness to the fine essay on that poet.

Office Politics

WILFRID SHEED

Farrar, Straus, \$4.95

ROBERT ALTER

As a comic novelist, Wilfrid Sheed is refreshingly different. In contrast to the more fashionable writers for whom comedy is a kind of hysterical release of existential tension, an attempt to blow apart the rottenness of it all with heavy charges of savage hilarity, Sheed's humor is calculated, restrained, quietly witty, and he tries to use comedy, as it was once used in the novel, to illuminate the growth of a limited individual to a modest fulfillment.

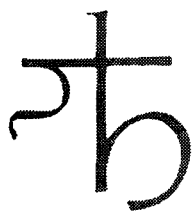
Office Politics is both a study of the varieties of stultifying egotism evoked by the prospect of power and, in an unpretentious way, a comic *Bildungsroman*. Its satiric exposure is perfectly achieved; its presentation of a moral coming-of-age is perhaps less than adequately persuasive. The office in question in the novel is that of an American journal of liberal opinion, presided over by a British editor, Gilbert Twining, who dominates his editorial staff with a peculiar combination of tweedy public-school charisma and cold calculation. When Twining is hospitalized after a heart attack, the members of the staff immediately begin a struggle for the succession, but each of them is haunted by the ironic specter of Twining's personality, and each unwittingly produces his own grotesque imitation of the absent editor in chief.

The character of Twining strikes me as the novel's greatest single success. There is something suggestively elusive about him; he is a man who has conjured himself up by a sustained act of intellectual legerdemain until even he hardly knows what exists behind the gracefully controlled gestures. Sheed wryly sums up the convictions of the editor as they impress the novel's protagonist: "Twining was basically anti-ideology, anti-slogan, so his position could only be expressed in examples, and George couldn't think of any examples." Because the narration shifts

from one character's point of view to another's, we get Twining from the outside, seductively confidential, ruthlessly manipulative, and Twining from the inside, a well-meaning Englishman with high intellectual standards among semi-literate Americans whose devious innocence never ceases to amaze and confuse him. Whatever Twining says and thinks, whom ever he influences, he is an intriguing character because his intelligence is so subtle, so ingeniously poised, even in its self-deceptions.

The central theme of *Office Politics* is the childishness of grown-up people—especially of the intellectual variety—in their desires for and responses to power. Twining explains his own behavior as a permanent extension of a childhood rela-

tionship with a domineering cousin; and toward the end of the book, George Wren, the junior editor who is the protagonist, sees Twining as a schoolmaster caning his subordinates intellectually and reducing them to sulking schoolboys. In fact, one of the two associate editors is a pathetic Fat Boy, who, after failing in the position of command, takes to tantrums, while the other associate tries to gain control by allying himself with a rich widow who has the body of an aging voluptuary, the sensibility of an antediluvian spinster, and, quite clearly, the mind of a small child. The magazine's advertising manager is no more than a sullen boy, nurturing grudges against all the big kids, and George Wren himself is an overgrown adolescent who writes "modern" poetry,



The Future of Belief

The title of *The Future of Belief: Theism in a World Come of Age* by Leslie Dewart alludes to a work of Freud on religion as an illusion and to a phrase of Bonhoeffer on the maturing of the consciousness of Western man. *The Future of Belief*, then, is written in the shadow of the greatest assault on theism and of the most revolutionary defense of it in the history of Christianity. Yet this is neither "radical theology" as the term has been employed by various Protestant thinkers, nor "death of God theology" as the term is used by journalists and others. Rather it is the first fully articulated attempt by a Roman Catholic religious philosopher completely to recast traditional Christian doctrine in the light of modern man's new self-understanding.

Central to this self-understanding is the sense of historical evolution and of the transcendence of the human person; and it is in the framework of these two complementary data that Leslie Dewart of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto discusses his theory of doctrinal development, the knowability of God, the dogma of the Trinity, salvation history, and the import of human achievement. The overall impact of the book is that of a brilliantly original vision—the kind of theology, one imagines, Teilhard de Chardin would have applauded—which is nevertheless utterly compatible with the most rigorously orthodox conception of Christian doctrine. Harvey Cox says: "This book could be epoch making."

The Future of Belief (\$4.95) by Leslie Dewart is now available at your bookstore.



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puzzles over his misdirected, no longer glowing idealism, and is not sure which side to be on in the conflict of office politics.

As the action unfolds, George goes through a crisis of apathy and self-discovery which finally leads him to slough off Twining's manipulative influence and, with it, his own boyishness. The difficulty is that George the overgrown boy is perhaps disarming but not very interesting as a character, nor is he rendered with sufficient complexity to engage us fully in the process of his moral growth. For a figure whose formation is the subject of the novel, George's background remains rather sketchy: his wife is given only a few quick walk-ons, his infant son is a cardboard prop, his personal history a series of undeveloped allusions. What is more important, there is not enough evidence in George's conversation or in the authorial report of his thoughts that he has a really interesting mind, though in the denouement it is essential that we should believe him to be, at least potentially, Twining's intellectual equal.

But even with George, there are compensations. If he is not so subtle or complicated as Twining, he observes experience with a kind of intellectual zest—it is of course Sheed's as well—that continually affords small delights. This quality, to be sure, is not limited to George. The minds of all of Sheed's intellectuals gambol over images, juggle clichés and literary allusions, spin out fanciful poetic structures from the gray prosaic substances of their world. Thus, the act of taking a familiar remedy for indigestion becomes an imaginative adventure: "The Alka-Seltzer plunged through his system, spreading beneficence. Cool, sea-green bubbles." The description of a petulant wife's distant voice on the telephone is the occasion for a self-mocking exploration of the possibilities of simile: "There were scratches in her soft voice like an old phonograph record. If you were an old man expecting to die before spring, that was just what people would probably sound like."

Office Politics is not a dazzling or spectacular novel, but precisely for that rea-

son, it is a reassuring novel to read. It does many small things very well, in contrast to the general tendency of American fiction nowadays to do a few big things very badly. It reminds us that the genre begins with individual people in particular social settings, not with Man, Culture, and the Cosmos. And it demonstrates that in an age preoccupied with dramatizing its own manifest crises, the novel can still be an urbane, intelligent, and—with no apologies for the word—amusing activity for civilized people.

The Nature of Love

IRVING SINGER

Random House, \$7.95

ROBERT G. HAZO

At first glance, love seems to be the least recondite of subjects. Yet, despite its enormous press it is, if not the least understood of fundamental ideas, certainly the least formally analyzed. There seems to be an inverse proportion between the human importance of the subject and the philosophical attention devoted to it. For one thing, the practical interest dwarfs the theoretical, as witness all those manuals festooned with rules for a good marriage or—what often is taken as synonymous—a good sex life. For another, most theories that we have are advanced in the course of works devoted to other topics; Aristotle, for example, deals with love in his *Ethics*. Moreover, as Irving Singer notes, the paucity of theorizing about love in this century is particularly pronounced.

This is hardly accidental. Consider the range of the idea. Stones are said to love the center of the earth. The upward motion of fire is called a function of its love. The attraction of iron filings to a magnet is described as the effect of love. Tracts have been written on the love-life of amoebae, paramecia, snails and ants. The mating of certain spiders, we are told, is preceded by movements called love dances. Dogs, cats, horses, camels and elephants are said to love their masters as well as each other.

Men talk of their love for women, a woman, other men, children, themselves, humanity, money, art, domesticity, prin-

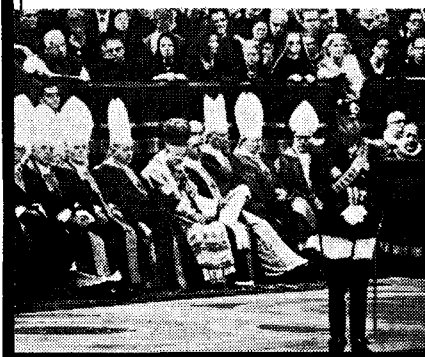
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ciples, a cause, an occupation, adventure, security, ideas, a country, life, beefsteak, good wine and even loving itself. There is a cosmic view that holds that the propagation of plants, the procreation of animal species and the perpetual movement of heavenly bodies are all inspired by love. For Aquinas, among others, angels and devils are distinguished by the quality of their love. God Himself is said to *be* love.

Singer's *The Nature of Love* propounds a conception of love as idealization of the beloved and uses it in a remarkably ambitious attempt to discipline the apparent chaos of theories of love from Plato to Luther. (Subsequent volumes will deal with "courtly love, Romantic love and love in the modern world.") Though his overriding aim is to find unity in the tradition by threading it on his own theme, Singer is at his best when he is simply explaining, comparing or contrasting what the various philosophers said, i.e., when he is not presuming to understand them better than they understood themselves. The depth and detail of the explanations of the theories of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Ovid, Lucretius, Augustine, Aquinas, etc. contrast sharply with the rather simple way in which they are evaluated. Curiously, Singer's own sophisticated appreciation of the subtleties of love is not matched by his own conception of it, which is confused and altogether too narrow.

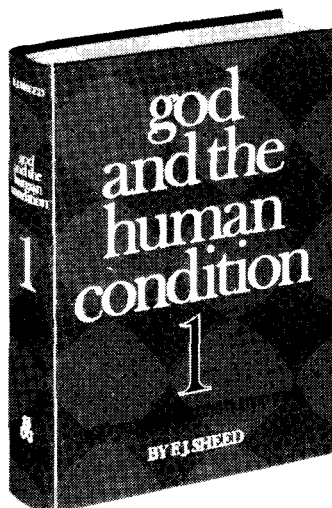
The notion that is the core of Singer's own thought about love is introduced in the title of his first chapter: "Appraisal and Bestowal." Though both are forms of valuation, it is bestowal not appraisal that is the essence of human love (the author's principal concern). There is no difficulty about appraisal. To appraise is to react (accurately or inaccurately) to value already existing in an object, to evaluate it either individually (as good for me) or objectively (as good in itself). To understand bestowal, however, is quite another matter.

Since we are told that bestowal is a form of valuation, we naturally think of it as a kind of judgment, albeit not one that reacts to value but rather somehow imparts it to the beloved, making her a person in the eyes of the lover and not

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merely a means to personal satisfaction. Yet, in those crucial passages in which Singer tries to give precision to his cardinal notion, all kinds of disparate elements are brought in. To bestow value or idealize means "caring," "wishing to benefit," "delighting," "encouraging," "respecting," "sharing," "sympathizing," etc. Careful rereading does not help. Bestowal is distinguished sharply from benevolence in one place and associated with it in another. It also is said frequently to involve some sort of union and sometimes is associated with sexual desire. It is at one point an attitude and at another point an act, cognitive in one context and tendential in another. Singer, in one place, says: "If I am right, the entire psychology of religious groups needs to be re-examined." One can go further and say that if Singer is right, all common sense psychology needs radical revision, since bestowal seems to ignore or transcend the traditional distinction between thinking and feeling.

Singer probably emphasizes bestowal because he understands love as something

positive and creative and rejects the claims that it is a kind of transient madness based on illusion. But, the emphasis is distorting rather than clarifying. The author obviously is aware of the other notions frequently associated with love, e.g., benevolence, union, sex, admiration, etc., but he fixes on bestowal, and then confuses it by trying to subsume the others under it.

We start then with a rather ambiguous conception of love. It can be given, perhaps, somewhat more precision by describing it formally as whatever makes a woman "special" or "prized" in the eyes of a man. (Singer writes, almost exclusively, from the perspective of a masculine lover.) The application of this concept to a number of the theories examined, however, simply does not work. The excellence of the analysis of the Platonic theory of love, for example, obviously is tarnished by the attempt to make the, at best, ancillary notion of bestowal central to it.

The Old Testament conception of love as *nomos*, as submission to God's will,

cannot be interpreted successfully in terms of bestowal, yet Singer attempts to do just that. (The forced emphasis of his claim in this context is reminiscent of the preacher who penciled on the margin of his sermon: "Argument weak here; yell like hell!") When nothing else will avail, an author is said actually to bestow value on his own theory of love, to idealize it. The idea of philosophy as a form of love is nothing new, but to attempt to compare it and the love between a man and a woman in terms of idealization boggles the mind. Where the notion of bestowal is central, as in the discussion of Divine love, Singer uses it to good advantage, but he all too frequently misuses it elsewhere.

If Singer's concept of bestowal is less than adequate to unify the diversity of theories about love, *The Nature of Love* is, nevertheless, a valuable and heroic attempt to do so. Perhaps the author's most striking talent is his ability to get the very most out of the whole sweep of his material. His range and perspective are astonishing, occasionally even majestic, as he discovers similarities and parallels that transcend centuries and bridge cultures. The comparison of Aristotle and Freud on love is a particularly good example of the free and suggestive play of his mind. A number of these comparisons result from his obvious disregard for the temporal guidelines laid down for this volume as he does not hesitate to draw from contemporary sources whenever they prove illuminating. With only rare lapses, his prose is compelling and his mind never dull as he moves from one level of generality to another with ingenious facility. But what is most attractive about *The Nature of Love* is the sense of intellectual adventure with which it was undertaken. Were there more of it in contemporary philosophical work there would be less talk about philosophy's being dead.

Landscape in Concrete

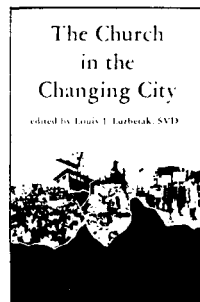
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JUDITH SKLAR

When Jakov Lind created Anton Barth and Hermann Wolhbrecht in his superb novella, *Soul of Wood*, he created a great

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Edited by
J. D. Crichton

The future of the liturgy after Vatican II is by no means clear; renewal contends with reaction, initiative with apathy, and uncertainty marks the attitude of many on the subject. In this book, a number of liturgical experts, among them Father J. D. Crichton, Clifford Howell, SJ, and Laurence Bevenot, OSB, provide clear views of the main liturgical problems in such areas as language, music, and participation; they also develop sound guide lines for the continuing reform that must gradually eliminate these problems.

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comic team. The two of them are grotesques, but they are also characters, live personalities with quirks and attitudes. We want to know what happens to them, and we read to find out.

Lind's first novel, *Landscape in Concrete*, is a totally different matter. It concerns German Sergeant Gauthier Bachmann, the only member of the 8th Hessian Infantry Regiment to survive the battle of Voroshenko. He has (understandably) suffered a nervous breakdown, and when the novel begins he is on sick leave pending discharge. But Bachmann's conception of his own state of mind is considerably different from the army's—"I'm not sick any more than millions of my comrades who are fighting for their country right now. If I'm sick, so is all Germany, all Europe, the whole world"—and he calmly sets out to find his regiment.

This is a brilliant notion, a classic statement of the madness of war, in which only "sane" men are licensed to shoot one another. And if Lind were able to sustain this inversion, in all its irony, horror, and bitterness, *Landscape in Concrete* would be a brilliant book. But he cannot, and it is because of the very nature of his main character.

From the first page of the novel, Lind describes Gauthier Bachmann in terms of the inanimate: he is "heavy and shapeless, like the blanket of clouds that covered the fields." In civilian life his specialty is metals: he is a gold- and silversmith. He cannot tolerate dirt or disorder, and he is comfortable only when things are precisely black or precisely white. "Dead things didn't bother him . . . they didn't remind him of anything living. If you could only get through the couple of minutes between life and death." Nature confuses him because it is chaotic: "Somebody ought to pick it all up, sort it out carefully, cut it down to size when necessary, and pack it all neatly in big boxes and little boxes."

Bachmann, in short, is not a man; he is a machine. He can be programmed to do anything. Burning villages, killing two thousand Russian prisoners in one afternoon is "all routine, nothing unusual"; murdering a family "without batting an eyelash" is "good and necessary." In fact

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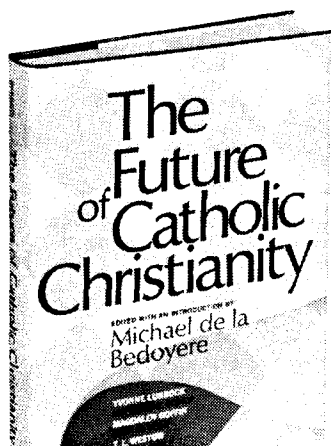
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it is proof of his manhood, confirmation of his humanity, because the most essential part of himself, his brute force, is being realized. In peace he is an ordinary respectable citizen; in war he "comes to himself"—he is a horse, pure strength, unconditionally available to the programmer. He says, "As a horse I could amount to something—as a man I am a manure pile that breathes." The choice is obvious: though he is momentarily converted to peace, at the end of the book he marches off toward the East, toward the war, to search for his regiment once more.

This rote behavior, this force without brain, makes Bachmann a very good symbol but a very dull character. Both the structure and the impact of the book rest completely on his automatic personality, and he cannot carry them. He has no complexity, no variation in his constitution, and it is all too easy to tire of his endless philosophizing and his mindless brutality. One hopes for some insight, some independent act, some passionate cruelty; but he witnesses only the monotonous, mechanical execution of orders. The net effect is the total neutralization of Bachmann's atrocities. One becomes anesthetized, like Bachmann. As he says when he kills the two thousand Russians, "it is more boring than horrible." This in itself is a horrifying vision, if only one could be compelled to continue reading. But instead one ceases to care, to be interested at all.

The most persuasive and exciting elements of *Landscape in Concrete* are the minor ones. Lind has drawn a grand succession of characters to accompany Bachmann: the weasel Schnotz who poisoned a Belgian cook out of homosexual jealousy; the Norwegian schoolmaster Half-tan with a "talent for malice" who decapitates a young man, sells the head to his family, and kills them all; the lecherous police chief Muschel who pays no attention in interrogations because he is mentally stripping a six-foot woman.

In them all the humor-horror that is so evident in *Soul of Wood* is brilliantly equalled, for they, at least, are passionate. The theme of sexual deviation that runs beneath it all is ultimately much more interesting than the major theme. Germany is "a nation of queers," "gov-

erned by perverts." Bachmann, who looks "too virile," is always proving his manhood; yet he is "seduced like a child," "used," and "abused," and he is impotent with Helga, his girlfriend. Helga is actually a Lesbian; Muschel the police chief is a masochist who imagines welts on his back with relish. Everything is its opposite, inverted, unexpected, interesting, like the book's initial idea.

These things almost compensate for Bachmann's failure, but not quite. One keeps thinking, "What a brilliant idea, and what a disappointment." When someone has as much talent, invention, and savagery as Lind, and when he turns them on such important material, it is a disappointment indeed.

The Steagle

IRVIN FAUST

Random House, \$4.95

IRVING MALIN

Harold Weissburg, the hero of this novel, is a divided man. Although he is respectable, neurotic, and safe, he longs to become healthy and corrupt. He is, in other words, the "steagle"—a "wartime coalition." He lets go during the Cuban missile crisis because he believes that the last days have arrived. He assumes various underground identities; he breaks out of his conventional prison.

Now Weissburg—or Rocco Salvato and Andy Hardy as he names himself—does the things he has always wanted to do. He jets to Chicago, Hollywood, and Las Vegas. He boozes. He sleeps with Gentile girls. He punches potential enemies. *He becomes the hero of his own movie.*

But as Weissburg participates in his pop-culture imagination—at times we are not sure whether he is acting or thinking—he begins to see that he cannot really lose himself. He is still impure and hybrid; he is more "human" than the comic-strip characters he emulates. Thus he "drops the gun"—to use one of his favorite expressions—and returns to his too-comfortable house in the suburbs. His "crisis" has passed.

There is no doubt that Faust captures the frantic atmosphere in which Weiss-

burg moves. He details mad gestures and violent juxtapositions with precision—especially in the Hollywood and Las Vegas adventures—because he carefully chooses his language. He uses one-syllable words in short sentences; he shoots these at us:

The plane banked in a great, slow circle. The Pacific slash, blue and white-capped, slanted beside him, then leveled out. Then the green and the treetops were racing beneath him, and then the boxhouses, and then the traffic. He stared at the solid, flowing ribbons of L.A. Freeways. Free ways. Flowing till they thickened and choked and stopped. Then pour asphalt over the cartops and start again? Free ways.

Not only does Faust accelerate his sentences—he tends to describe acceleration itself. Movement upon movement—his style is charged, energetic, kinetic; it catches our national speed.

Faust, however, has his problems with stasis (or stability). Although he can push us into certain adventures, he cannot completely characterize Weissburg.

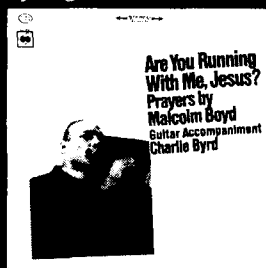
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What do we learn about him except that he possesses middle-age, Jewish, academic clichés? Can we *care* about his divided longings? Faust merely uses him; he does not establish any ordered relationship to him (and to us) because he is more interested in stylized frenzy than deep characterization.

The Steagle emerges, finally, as a fun-movie. It has lots of noise and action, but it lacks human beings. It is, like many Hollywood creations, exciting, one-dimensional, and forgettable.

Twentyone Twice: A Journal

MARK HARRIS

Little, Brown, \$5.95

MARTIN TUCKER

Frankly, I read two reviews of this book before sitting down to write my own review. I wanted to find out why this book seemed off the Mark to me. One review helped: it called Harris a liar, and cited three examples of his lies. Then the reviewer went on to say Harris was after a greater truth than the truth of facts—as if mightier and lesser truths existed, and one could conveniently sort them out.

Perhaps truth can be divided into grades—like Grade A truth, sub-important truth B, irrelevant truth C. Harris doesn't set out to construct such a system, but his instinct is to throw bricks at any authority, any system. In the garden of Eden he would find fault with the luscious lack of choice, wondering what he was doing there, *in the first place*. He needs



REVIEWERS

ERIK WENSBERG is an editor with the New York Times Book Review.

ROBERT ALTER is a professor of English at Columbia.

ROBERT G. HAZO has written for both *The New Republic* and *Commentary*.

JUDITH SKLAR is on the staff of a New York publishing house.

IRVING MALIN is the author of *Jews and Americans* (Southern Illinois Univ. Press).

MARTIN TUCKER is an associate professor of English at Long Island University.

RELIGION IN PRACTICE

By ANTHONY LEVI, S. J. This book points the way in which the Church's moral teaching must develop to keep up with the progress of humane values in secular society. Father Levi affirms that the norms governing human perfection are the same, whether perfection is realized in simple behavior or in articulate intellectual belief in the Christian revelation. The author examines contemporary questions and their consequences for both the Christian believer and the liberal humanist. "Exciting new reflections about the relation between God and His World."—JAROSLAV PELIKAN, Yale University \$6.00

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LITURGY AND ART

By H. A. REINHOLD. A long-time spokesman in the Catholic liturgical movement discusses the historical development of the liturgy, the role of symbolism and mystery, and liturgical prayer, as well as the relation of liturgical art to other forms of religious art, and the prospect of new forms that may accompany the liturgical reforms of Vatican II. "There are still few who can combine liturgical erudition and pastoral insight as does Father Reinhold," wrote *Commonwealth* of a previous study, *THE DYNAMICS OF LITURGY*. A volume in *Religious Perspectives*. Illustrated. \$3.95

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an oppressor. Without an "ism" he loses his fighting verb.

Perhaps Harris is our champion doubter. The man who warns us off all ideology except good humanism, and in accomplishing his mission, reduces smug assumptions of faith to dubious opinion. Perhaps.

I have already written "perhaps" three times because Harris's book seems to me a perhappence. Like everything else he has written, it is well-written. And the book has Harris's charm: his frankness, his honesty (yes), and his wonderful sense of humor. Its aim is to record Harris's experience in dealing with a government investigation into Harris's fitness to be a Peace Corps investigator; and with Harris's later experiences in investigating Peace Corps "risks" in an African country he chooses to call Konghono (no such country exists).

What Harris is after is the true "journal" tone: that kind of writing that reveals a man, and his relationships with men.

The book begins on November 8, 1964, when Harris has to fly to Washington, D.C., because his "loyalty" and "sanity" are in question by the U.S. security system. The first half of the journal details Harris's experiences with an investigating committee. They dredge up his "shady" past—his involvement with Communists in his young days in St. Louis; and his "breakdown" after which he was discharged from the army as a psychoneurotic. Harris questions the truth of such "facts"—he never was a Communist, he merely flirted with Communism and some female Bolsheviks for "a hundred hours," while his real "truth" is in the hundred hours a week every week for almost all his life he has given to writing. Harris says he never had a nervous breakdown, because in the army hospital he was "functioning all the time"; he wrote his first novel there.

In the end Harris gets his assignment. By the time he arrives in Konghono, the Peace Corps "risks" have been warned about him, and Harris finds he is the

hated authority figure. He stays only two weeks.

Earlier, Harris tells of taking over the creative writing course at San Francisco State College. His boss warns him not to walk off the job in the middle of it, and even holds up Harris's release-time (from teaching) Authorization Form, to make his point obvious. Apparently Harris does walk off jobs when he thinks no purpose remains for him to stay around. At one point Harris reveals he did not fire a teacher because he hadn't seen how bad the teacher was in the classroom. On the promise of personally observing him, Harris got a stay of firing. Harris never got around to observing the teacher (something else always came up), and in the end the teacher was fired anyway. When Harris left Africa after two weeks, the people in Washington couldn't believe it; for them he had just arrived.

For Harris, genuineness of feeling is the only answer in a world in which many "truths" exist. For this reason his book is to me an example of the most frustrating kind of commitment.

Harris calls his book *Twentyone Twice* because he wants to return to the feelings of a young man, the vitality and uncompromising view of the twenty-one-year-old radical of the left or right. Going G. B. Shaw one better, he decides not to waste youth on the young, but to become youthful again, even though he is now 42 years (or twice 21). I think Harris is failing to recognize one Grade A truth: You cannot go young again. When a middle-aged writer of distinction throws stones at houses of authority for the youth of it, he is not hitting his father and gaining his maturity; he is hitting his son—those who look to him for understanding—and hurting himself.

CORRESPONDENCE

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(Continued from page 93)

10 p.m. No book or other reading matter has, in fact, ever been forbidden.

The attendance of Sisters at *Lumen Vitae* was not forbidden; it was not even mentioned directly or indirectly in the directives. In private discussion it was ad-

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vised that Sisters without a working knowledge of French and without an undergraduate knowledge could profit little by graduate lectures in theology or catechetics. The Sisters were not forbidden to invite the laity to dine at the convent, nor to eat with the laity. The laity however were not to be invited to eat with the religious community. Exceptions even in this matter were to be made in mission houses.

Permit me to quote the significant and concluding paragraph of the directives, which, by the way, are taken almost entirely from the Sisters' own constitution and directory: "The Community has had a most gratifying growth. It enjoys the vitality of youthfulness. Its members are being formed according to some of the excellent contemporary developments in the spiritual life and in apostolic activities. As was said of the early Christians, so let it be said of you: that they were 'of one mind and one heart' (Acts 4:32)."

It is hard to understand how so much misinformation could have been publicized, especially since in this particular

matter a decent respect for the confidence, privacy, and conscience of others makes it difficult to protect oneself against false imputations.

(MOST REV.) KARL J. ALTER
Archbishop of Cincinnati

"Hurt or Puzzled"

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: We at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations do not know whether to be hurt or puzzled by the fact that our official publication, *American Judaism*, was not mentioned at all in Arthur A. Cohen's "A Guide to Jewish Journals" in your issue of September 30.

In the past six years *American Judaism* has undergone enormous changes, freeing itself from strangulation by parochial house organ material and devoting more and more of its space and attention to outstanding essays, poetry and fiction about Judaism and Jewish life.

We have published original essays by Norman Cousins, Charles Angoff, Philip Roth, Karl Shapiro, Gertrude Samuels and Moses Hadas; fiction by Isaac Bashevis Singer, Dan Jacobson, Herbert Gold, Burton Bernstein, Jo Sinclair, Chaim Potok and Arthur Sainer; humor by Arthur Kober, Barry Spacks and Sara Kasden; poetry by John Hollander, Muriel Rukeyser, Arthur Gregor, and Paul Goodman. Our working critics are Leslie Fiedler on books, films and theatre; Alan Rich on music; Alfred Werner on art.

We also have been fortunate enough to grace our pages with original illustrations by Ben Shahn, John Groth, Jacob Landau and many others.

Recently we revised our format to match the richness of the contents of our menu. We would not have minded if Arthur Cohen had chosen to clobber us, but we do hate to be totally ignored. The omission seemed all the more surprising since Mr. Cohen himself contributed one of the lead articles to our last issue—"The Retrieval of The Human: Some Reflections on Morality" and has written for us before.

We operate on a modest budget, appear only four times a year and do not hope to presume to rival some of the pub-



Portrait of an artist

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Editor, *American Judaism*

Secularity

Newton, Mass.

To the Editors: Some questions about Harvey Cox's insights on secularization and Bonhoeffer's insights on "religionless Christianity": Do they add more than they subtract from the wisdom of the ages? What are the credits and the debits? Is "religious Christianity," as opposed to "religionless Christianity," still relevant for the twentieth-century?

Cox makes a good point when he says that "man must now assume the responsibility for his world; he can no longer shove it off on some religious power." It is true that what many Catholics have looked upon as a disaster is in fact a blessing, namely, the Church's loss of political and even social influence.

Cox defines secularization, which he welcomes, as "the liberation of man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and toward this one." A recurring theme in Cox is the assumption that religious faith, religious Christianity is either dead or dying, that it has no "relevance" (a favorite word of his) for modern man. What is to replace it is never clear because Cox is never willing to come right out and say what kind of Christ he himself believes in. At times it seems to be Christ-as-a-wonderful-guy. At other times he gives Him a capital H, which seems to indicate some kind of difference not only in degree but also in kind. In "The Secular City" Easter is hailed as a kind of "liberating activity" like Exodus, but whether this is purely symbolic or represents a belief in the Resurrection and everything that goes with it he does not say. On balance it seems fair to conclude that Cox does not believe in Christianity as most Catholics understand it.

The clearest expression of this anti-religious viewpoint is contained in his contribution to last year's *Commonweal* symposium, when he wrote, "I would defend the need to extricate the Gospel from 'religion', but only if Bonhoeffer's definition of the term 'religion' remains constant in the discussion, i.e., religion as dependency, inwardness, and a metaphysical perspective which sees *this* world . . . somehow subsumed within another one."

I know one Protestant minister who denies firmly that this is an accurate replay of Bonhoeffer's mind, but no matter. Let us take so simple and basic a statement of Christian faith as the Lord's Prayer and see if it can be reconciled with these rejections. "Our Father who art in heaven (other-worldliness), hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven (other-worldliness). Give us this day our daily bread (dependency), and forgive us our trespasses (dependency) as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation (dependency) but deliver us from evil (dependency)."

Cox has told me that in the *Commonweal* article he might have added that he rejected religion "when it is defined *exclusively* in terms of dependency, inwardness, etc." I agree that it is not possible to explain entirely the mystery wrapped up in the enigma of man's free will and his dependency upon God's grace, a mystery which is admirably expressed in the old cliché, "Pray as though everything depended upon God, work as though everything depended upon yourself."

After this conversation I felt that he had made a certain concession to Christian dependency, but not very much, and that we were still far apart on inwardness and other-worldliness. His theology is very strongly extrovert, self-reliant, and this-worldly, more so than can, I believe, be reconciled with the Gospels.

Of course it is possible today to be a Christian theologian and not believe in Christianity. Paul Tillich established a reputation as a theological colossus without believing in anything more substantial than "God as the ground of man's being." I remember once asking him if this God that he spoke of was a personal, self-conscious God such as Christians be-

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lieve in. In the nicest, most Christian possible way he looked at me as though I were out of my mind.

To the question of relevance one could say that whatever is true is relevant. It is true that over the years man has become *almost* independent of God as far as his ability to produce enough food, clothes and shelter for his needs.

Even Dan Callahan appears to waver in his faith in the relevance of religion to modern man. He says that "many men patently manage to live anti-metaphysical, pragmatic lives and seem to be none the worse for it." They "exist happily."

Who knows? All I know is that I never met a man who was perfectly happy, and sane, for more than a few minutes, or more likely, a few seconds. We know enough about man, whether ancient or modern, to know that it is his nature to be discontent and craving contentment, incomplete and craving completion, imperfect and craving perfection.

"Is it true?" is still the first question. "Unless Christ rise from the dead, then is our faith vain," as St. Paul put it. Bishop Robinson, and I feel, Harvey Cox, say that belief in the Resurrection is "a secondary problem." It is not a secondary problem. It is *the* primary problem. Because if Christ rose from the dead, as we believe, then that fact is relevant for man yesterday, today and forever.

I don't understand those friends of Dan Callahan, those "disturbed Catholics . . . who have heeded the Church's call to serve the world and then have found, once they started doing so, that their Christianity ceased to have much meaning for them. They discovered that the work of the world seems to carry its own intrinsic justification, requiring neither religious motives nor religious goals."

My own experience has been precisely and completely the opposite. The more deeply I have become involved in the service of the world and the more responsible positions I have held, the more acutely conscious I have become of my dependency on God, and the relevance of that dependence. Maybe there are supermen who can operate effectively in the world without any help from God, or any reference to Him. I am not one of them.

JOHN C. CORT

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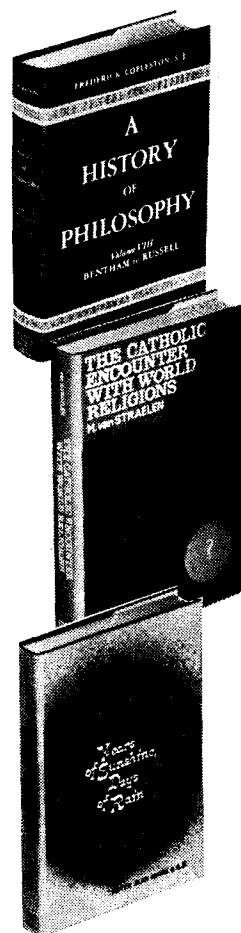
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